

97-84051-11

National Liberal
Immigration League.

Division of labor and
distribution of immigrants...

New York

1910

97-84051-11
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308	National liberal immigration league.
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Box 136	Division of labor and distribution of immigrants an appeal for free transportation; opinions of the press ... New York, National liberal immigration league, 1910. 14 p. 23 cm.

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TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35 mm

REDUCTION RATIO: 10:1

IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA ☒ IIA ☐ IB ☐ IIB

DATE FILMED: 3-25-97

INITIALS: CB

TRACKING # : 22736

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DIVISION OF LABOR
AND
DISTRIBUTION OF IMMIGRANTS

308

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Reg. 12.6

An Appeal for Free Transportation

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

A stream that is dangerous when
unchecked will prove
a blessing to the
land when well
directed

National Liberal Immigration League
150 NASSAU STREET
NEW YORK

DIVISION OF LABOR
AND
DISTRIBUTION OF IMMIGRANTS

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National Liberal Immigration League
150 NASSAU STREET
NEW YORK

Free Distribution of Labor and Immigration

WHILE our congested Eastern cities are overrun with thousands of sturdy laborers without employment and often without bread, a need for these same laborers is felt in other parts. There is a Bureau of Information in Washington which can furnish to almost every one of the unemployed the names of several firms where their work is needed. Were they to go to such localities, it would be a benefit both to them and to their employers, but they lack the means to pay the travelling expenses, and generally are suspicious of any offers of employers to advance these expenses on their wages.

If the Bureau of Information could give to unemployed laborers transportation to where their labor is in demand, thousands of them would be saved from want, and they would, on the other hand, benefit the country through their labor.

Immigrants arriving here could also be directed where they have relatives or where their labor is needed, but they cannot afford to pay the cost of transportation to those localities.

Free transportation will greatly contribute to the solution of this problem. The Argentine Republic furnishes immigrants with one week's hospitality and with free railroad transportation to any part of that country. Other South American governments offer similar inducements. What such Republics, with their scanty means, are

doing, our country, the wealthiest in the world, can certainly accomplish. The burden which such a provision would entail upon the Federal Treasury would be more than compensated by the benefit which it would bring about.

We request all organizations and individuals that are in favor of a measure for the proper distribution of immigrants, to send resolutions or letters to that effect to their State and Federal Representatives, and to kindly notify the League when they do so.

NATIONAL LIBERAL IMMIGRATION LEAGUE.

In words more or less similar, the League has for the past two or three years been agitating this subject throughout the country, amongst members, friends and well-wishers. The above is an exact copy of a circular that was sent out to the Press some six months ago. It was well received and freely commented upon by the papers, from one end of the country to the other. Many of the papers published the circular as it came to them, word for word; while others contented themselves with giving extracts of the most vital points in our argument, as if coming from themselves editorially, thus placing the entire weight of the paper at our back.

It would be impossible, in a publication of pamphlet size, to reproduce all the Press comments elicited by our circular. So we confine ourselves to giving just a few, as appended, chosen more or less at random from the great mass of clippings that have come to our hands.

Millford, Mass., Daily News—August 5, 1909

FOR FREE TRANSPORTATION.

"The West cries out for labor" is the burden of a recent press dispatch. There is nothing new or novel about the call, it simply being confirmatory of the view that prosperity is gaining ground out there. In a normal condition the West is always in need of labor, that being the most serious problem its industries have to wrestle with. Bear in mind it does not say the West cries out for gold seekers, etc. Of course that part of the country is open to seekers for fame and every sort of distinction and advancement, but its ever existing and urgent need is for men who earn their bread by the sweat of their brows.

In that connection it is timely to consider a movement on foot at Washington to have a law enacted to furnish free transportation for immigrants. There is already established a bureau of information which can supply to almost every one of the unemployed the names of several firms where their work is needed. But as will be readily seen that instrumentality falls short of filling the gap which prevails in the West, because laboring men are without a supply of money that will enable them to travel. On that account able-bodied immigrants

who would only be too glad to get work in any part of the country are stalled near the spot where they land from steamers.

Here is the situation in a nutshell. The East is afflicted with a congestion of all classes of laborers, some of whom are fastened here by family ties, while others cannot afford to leave it. The West on the other hand is suffering from the want of help and all kinds of interests are plagued by that condition of things. The United States government has partially bridged the difficulty by establishing the Bureau of Information alluded to above. But that does not half fill the vacuum, since information does not atone for the lack of funds which are requisite to transport workmen to remote sections of the country. Hence the desideratum is the supply of means with which to bring about the depletion of the overstocked East by moving a portion of its laborers to the understocked West. Why Congress does not see its way clear to provide for that emergency is a mystery. The cost of transporting men who seek employment would be a mere bagatelle by the side of other expenditures which Congress authorizes for nothing like as important objects as the one proposed.

St. Louis, Mo., Woman's National Daily—July 28, 1909

THE WORKERS AND THE JOB.

It is the policy of most of the republics of South America to furnish immigrants with one week's hospitality and with free transportation to any part of the country to which they desire to go. This policy is doubtless considered profitable; at least none of the South American states that have adopted it seem to be disposed to abandon it. Yet these countries are comparatively poor.

The problem of bringing the man who wants a job into personal communication with the employer who wants that man's services has long been discussed in the United States. At the present moment, as of yore,

the farmers of the West and Central West are greatly in need of helpers. They cannot get them, although there are thousands of men in the large cities of the country who are unemployed. The very size of our country prevents these two interests from getting together. The men who are unemployed lack the means essential to paying for their transportation and they are usually suspicious of the prospective employer who offers to advance their expenses on their wages. The situation is similar with respect to many industrial employments. There are a great many opportunities for work that are beyond the reach of the unemployed of the cities.

Uncle Sam has taken the first step,

but not the most important one, in solving this problem of bringing together the employer who seeks labor and the laborer who seeks employment. He has established in Washington a bureau of information that can tell inquirers where labor is obtainable. But this bureau is not as effective as it should be because it has not the power to set the deserving laborer down at the door of the factory where his services would be welcomed. Immigrants stream into the country and flock to the great cities, or worse, fall into the hands of speculators in labor, who ship them in droves to mines and industrial centers where they are often made virtual slaves, or, where sometimes, they find there is no work whatever for them or for anyone else. If these immigrants could be directed—yes, sent to the sections of the country where they have relatives or where work actually awaits them, and if other unemployed laborers, already in this country, could be similarly sent to places where their hands were needed, a great service would be done, not only to the employer and the employee as individuals, but to the people at large, who must now often feed and

clothe the unemployed as public charges.

It would not require a genius to plan a system by which the cost of transportation of the unemployed between the place of unemployment and the place of work might be met. The bureau of information already established would furnish the basis of such a system. If the Federal government advanced the money required for such transportation the problem would be practically solved. It does not follow, even if this money were advanced outright, with no expectation of return, that the government would lose in consequence, but there is apparently no necessity for making such advances. There is no reason why the government should not, in the majority of cases, re-collect these advances in small installments from the benefited laborer. Of course, the system might be abused by some, but then so are the library system, the educational system and the civil service system. Conditions resulting from such abuse, however, could scarcely be worse than those resulting from the present inability of the willing laborer to reach an anxious would-be employer.

New York Times—August 1st, 1909

FREE TICKETS FOR IMMIGRANTS.

Fifty thousand men are needed in the grain fields of the West at good wages. Thousands of able-bodied immigrants in this and other Atlantic cities would better their condition out West. Here they are a burden to the States and their municipalities, there they would add to the wealth of the nation. Without question they should be told of opportunities for work outside their congested districts, where their existence is from hand to mouth. But how many of these willing immigrants can afford the railway fare necessary to transport them to the land of work and its reward? Should not the government provide them transportation.

This, in effect, is the argument advanced by the National Liberal Immigration League for drafting its bill to provide free railway tickets for immigrant laborers to parts of this country

where their help is needed. To the objection of the labor unions that such a plan would lead to the importation of men into different localities who would act upon occasion as strikebreakers, the reply is made that any attempt to do this would have to be on a large scale, and would become instantly apparent, and the penalties of the contract labor law would make the undertaking perilous. Meanwhile other countries are providing "labor exchanges" in competition with the United States for this desirable labor.

We cannot have too many immigrants, if they are of the right kind. This nation, with four hundred millions of inhabitants, properly distributed, would show a greater per capita wealth than its present population can show. In their fear that immigration if stimulated, would deprive them of work, the labor unions are narrow and short sighted.

Springfield, Mass., Union—July 27, 1909

To Help the Unemployed.

It is a daring but by no means impractical recommendation that the National Liberal Immigration League makes in behalf of the great army of the unemployed in the East. The League proposes that the Federal government provide free transportation for laborers from the congested Eastern cities to the great farming country in the West, where labor is in demand. The government at the present time maintains a bureau of information in Washington which can furnish to the unemployed the names of many firms where their work is needed, but the great mass of idle workmen are unaware of this, and, if knowing it, would be little better off, lacking as they do the means of transportation. The press of the country has been teeming with comment on the anomalous situation which ex-

ists in the United States, with thousands of able-bodied men recruiting the "bread lines" of the big cities while the great farms of the Middle West are sending out despairing calls for hands to harvest the crops. In its appeal for free transportation, the League says: "If the bureau of information could give to unemployed laborers transportation to where their labor is in demand, thousands of them would be saved from want, and they would, on the other hand, benefit the country through their labor."

The cost of this transportation would not be a heavy burden on the country, and it should be a simple matter to provide a system which would serve as a check on abuses of it. The East would benefit by getting rid of a large part of its idle population, and the West by the influx of the labor it sorely needs.

Knoxville, Tenn., Sentinel—August 7, 1909

A LABOR PROBLEM.

Western farmers have been calling for laborers to work on the farms. Cities are crowded with people who cannot find work. The problem, therefore, is how to get the unemployed out of the cities to the farms. Probably never before in our history have the farmers of the country been more in need of labor or more willing to pay for it. In New York and Boston and Philadelphia and Chicago—in all the great centers of population—thousands of able-bodied men swell the "army of the unemployed," eking out a miserable existence upon such uncertain jobs as charity can bestow. In the meanwhile every incoming steamer is loaded with immigrants, bound hither to better their financial condition. These are the three elements in a tremendous problem, for which the National Liberal Immigration League offers a plausible solution.

As matters now go, the immigrant drifts to the city, still more seriously congesting the labor market there and affording no relief to the demand for labor elsewhere. This is natural. He

finds friends in the city, where he hears his own language and may live in accordance with the customs of his native land. Besides—and this frequently is the compelling factor in his case—he lands with very little money and the harvest fields which need him are at a tremendous distance, in the interior of a strange country. It thus happens that even when the bureau of information tells him where work is to be had, his slender purse will not carry him to the field that awaits.

The National Liberal Immigration League proposes simply to give the immigrant transportation to the place where he is needed. It is a simple, direct and adequate solution of at least a part of the problem. Like all such solutions, it is open to objections, some of them serious. It smacks of paternalism. It involves the expenditure of much money. It might attract more immigration than is desirable. It sets a precedent that might lead to endless complications and expense. These are all possibilities, not probabilities. The Argentine Confederation has tried the plan and profited thereby. So have

other republics to the south of us, for its face it seems worth trying here, for the evils of the present labor situation are undeniably as great, if not much greater, than any which would probably grow out of the proposed plan to correct them.

The cry of paternalism that has been raised against the program, as well as in some other instances, is not likely to find many sensible sympathizers. Our country has undergone a great many changes since the constitution was adopted, and measures that would have

been entirely indefensible a hundred years ago might be good now. The country has grown, and with the tremendous increase of population have come many problems which our statesmanship is solving. In the solution of these problems it has been found necessary to shatter a few idols. If the sending of laborers from place to place at public or private expense will redound to the general good, we see no reason why that program should not be followed. The cry that it is paternalism will not hold out against it.

Des Moines, Iowa, Tribune—July 29, 1909

TRANSPORTING IMMIGRANTS.

The National Immigration League has advanced a plausible scheme to assist the newly arrived foreigner and prospective citizen. It is asked that, in addition to maintaining a bureau of information through which the immigrant can get into communication with employers of labor all over the country, the government appropriate a fund which will be devoted to the work of transporting worthy aliens to interior points where they may earn a livelihood.

At present the larger percentage of foreigners who land in New York City are unable or else lack the courage to undertake long railroad journeys to places where they might become useful and self-supporting citizens. The majority of the aliens remain in the densely populated cities of the East, huddling together in tenement houses and serving neither themselves nor their adopted country. Laborers are

always needed in the interior parts of the country, and, as it is suggested by the immigration league, some method of distributing the new arrivals would be of benefit, both to the worker and the potential employer.

It would be expensive for the government to convey thousands of foreigners gratuitously to interior points, yet it is imperative that, so long as we are admitting large numbers of foreigners, their services should be brought into requisition. And certainly the larger number of immigrants are worthless as laborers while they are permitted to stay in their congested quarters of the Eastern cities, where the sort of work they are competent to perform is not plentiful. If the burden of carrying these bewildered folk to places of greater opportunities should prove too great, a system by which the government could be reimbursed from the first wages of its proteges might be arranged.

Lowell, Mass., Sun—July 16, 1909

TO RELIEVE CONGESTED DISTRICTS.

The National Liberal Immigration League has prepared a bill for Congress providing for a means of transferring immigrants from congested districts to places where they will have opportuni-

ties to work at fair wages. The government under the provisions of the bill would have to pay the expense of transportation. Some plan of this kind is necessary to prevent the overcrowding of immigrants at some points and the scarcity of labor at others.

Wheeling, W. Va., Intelligencer—July 30, 1909

PLACING THE IMMIGRANT.

... We have an elaborate immigration inspection system. We are careful to allow no one to enter who is afflicted with disease, or who has not a certain amount of money. We object to anyone who has no means of support and we also object to anyone who has a job contracted for him. Why should we not add to this elaborate machinery a bureau for the intelligent direction of immigrant labor to those fields where it is most needed and provide if necessary transportation or some other inducement to lead them in the right direction?

The millions of destitute Hebrews, Slavs and Italians that congregate in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Chicago, do not live in such places by preference, but simply because they do not know better. The boundless opportunities of the great undeveloped areas of the South and West are to them a sealed book. It would be a work of splendid humanitarianism to plant some of this surplus population in fields in which it would have an opportunity to prosper and develop into better citizenship.

Butte, Mont., Inter-Mountain—October 18, 1909

SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT HELP?

The National Liberal Immigration League has issued an appeal on behalf of the unemployed in cities who are unable to make their way to other sections of the country where their services would be in demand. This League is doing much to better the condition of immigrants and hopes through the press to enlist public sympathy in a movement intended to bring about the co-operation of the government in the aims and purposes of the organization. The League is headed by Edward Lauterbach, of New York, and its officers and members include some of the best known men of America. Andrew Carnegie, Charles H. Parkhurst, Charles W. Elliot and others equally prominent are included among its active members.

With winter approaching, the problem of what to do with the unemployed becomes more pressing. Addressing itself to this, the immigration league suggests that the government help to solve it by moving the unemployed to those sections where they are needed.

Aside from its cost, the chief objection to the proposed system would be the near approach to paternalism on the part of the government. But are we not unconsciously approaching paternalism more and more? And if the state is enabled to relieve the distress of many in time of disaster, surely it might with equal propriety aid in such a cause as that championed by the immigration league.

Bridgeport, Conn., Standard—July 28, 1909

A GOOD CAUSE.

The distribution of labor is one of the great problems of the day and one in the solution of which every aid that can be brought to bear should be engaged. There is work enough for all if all who will work can get where they are wanted and the easy way in which to differentiate

those who do not want to find employment is to put work within reach of those who have it not and observe their reception of it. There are all sorts of schemes to spend public money in interstate water transportation, the improvement of harbors and rivers and by the payment of subsidies to marine transportation for the help of a nearly obliterated shipping. It

would certainly be in line with some if not all of these worthy undertakings if a small part of the public money could be utilized in the distribution of labor and for the good of all the people this cause appeals to the common sense and business prudence of the intelligent every between those who will work and where. There is a National Liberal Immigration League, with headquarters at 150 Nassau street, New York City, the purpose of which is to secure "the proper regulation and better distribution of immigration." Thousands of immigrants who might be provided with work, herd in the big centers, congest the local labor markets, depress wages and put needless burdens upon all workers. Were these people able to find the work

they want the situation would be relieved immediately and a small part of the money spent annually in charity among these very people in other improvements that are less pressing might be used to better advantage in transporting the workers to the work and thus relieving the labor situation in a practical and effective manner. The Immigration League above referred to has recently sent out an "appeal on behalf of free transportation" that asks for help along the line indicated above. It is so reasonable in its statement of the case, has so much of business common sense in it and appeals so strongly to what should be the duty as well as the advantage of the authorities that we print it herewith and ask special attention to its presentation of the subject.

San Francisco, Cal., Bulletin—July 31, 1909

Why Not Give Immigrants Westward Transportation?

At the root of the immigration problem in this country is the tendency of foreigners to huddle together in congested districts. In consequence of this gregariousness there is not enough work for the immigrants in those districts, and they remain, for that reason, in a state of poverty. Moreover, the tendency of immigrants to stay together in "colonies" retards the assimilation process and keeps them alien through two generations.

While the seaport towns of the East are filled with unemployed men, the West is crying for laborers. But the immigrant, ignorant of our language, and without money, who is starving in the overcrowded East Side of New York, is unable to go fifteen hundred miles to take a job in Kansas or Nebraska. There is a bureau of information in Washington which will furnish to unemployed men a list of localities in which labor is wanted and the names of firms who have applied for men, but the information is of little use to an immigrant who lacks the money with which to make his way to the place where labor is in demand.

In the Argentine Republic, which attracts very heavy immigration from Europe, the government prevents the congestion of immigrants by providing each arriving immigrant with one week's maintenance and with free railroad transportation to any part of the country. Agents of the government distribute the immigrants to the points where they can earn a livelihood. Thus the government prevents crowding in particular localities, with its consequent scarcity of employment, and expedites assimilation into the native population. Other South American governments, it is said, make similar provision for the immigrants. Why, then, should not the United States government, which is so much wealthier than the South American governments, supply at least free railroad transportation to immigrants and thus stimulate a Westward movement of the stream of healthy new blood that is pouring constantly into the country? The resulting good to employers in the West from an abundant supply of labor, to the immigrants from improved conditions of employment, and to the country at large from the reader assimilation of aliens, would be worth many times the cost.

McKeesport, Pa., Times, July 28, 1909

Help Him and Ourselves.

An immigrant to the Argentine Republic is met by a representative of the government and conducted to a clean and commodious building where he is given a week's board and lodging, free of charge. During that week he is given information as to the country, and a government employment bureau puts him into touch with employers of labor who are looking for hands. With an official to advise him he selects a job, and the government pays his railroad fare to the scene of his future employment. There is no congestion of immigrants in a few localities while employers in others cry vainly for men. New arrivals are distributed according to the needs of the situation.

The United States might well imitate the example of the sister republic. Immigrants to America are turned loose at the gates of Ellis Island, to

shift for themselves. Naturally they go to friends, whether labor is needed where the friends are, or not. Far too many have little money for transportation and settle down in cities where labor already is a drag on the market. Few reach those parts of the West and South where capital and enterprise are begging vainly for men to wield the pick, hoe or shovel. The government has a sort of employment bureau at Washington, but it is not authorized to pay the railroad fares of immigrants, and the latter are suspicious of employers who offer to advance fares and deduct them from wages later. For this reason, the bureau is of little service.

By sending immigrants to employers who need them the government would not only help the newcomer, but contribute to the general welfare. A proper distribution of these immigrants would be worth all it would cost.

Pittsburg, Pa., Chronicle—August 4, 1909

. . . The idea is timely, practical and so thoroughly in line with the reforms, which the immigration author-

ities have been endeavoring to bring about that it should obtain widespread favorable recognition.

Providence, R. I., Journal—July 29, 1909

. . . While this is not a good time for adding to the expenses of the Federal government, the idea is worth con-

sidering. It is certain that the public money is spent on many less useful enterprises.

Brooklyn, N. Y., Times—July 29, 1909

Why should not our government follow such a course? Would it not be in keeping with our liberal policy

for conserving the country's resources?

Middletown, N. Y., Times-Press—July 27, 1909

. . . We think the movement in the interest of promoting the welfare

alike of the immigrant and those they come to dwell among.

Mankato, Minn., Free Press—July 28, 1909

There are a whole lot of men who are very busy trying to "save the nation" that could aid their country more

effectively by answering promptly the call of the grain fields.

New Haven, Conn., Evening Register—July 28, 1909

There certainly is a good deal to be said in favor of it. The failure of the man who is able to work and is willing to work to get where that work is, is a direct and irreparable economic loss. If that loss every approaches pauperism, and in some cases

it does, this means of obviating it is one which the government may well consider. In any case, it is wholly possible that the saving in wages-profit may more than compensate for the cost of transportation.

New York Commercial—July 12, 1909

It might be well to put such a law to the test as to its practicability even though in the process it might be reasonably charged that the United States government had gone into the employment office business. But there are so many sections of the country that need

immigrants and so many others where they are not needed but insist on congesting the population that a government plan of intelligent distribution may some day become an absolute necessity.

Frederick, Md., News—July 28, 1909

... Properly regulated, the system doubtless would accomplish a great deal of good.

Notable Utterance of Mr. Ormsby McHarg

(Formerly Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Labor)

IF this country is to be known as the land of the free and the home of the brave it must be made free, and the only way it can be made free is to put into the hands of men the tools of freedom—property. Immigrants cannot acquire it in the congested centers. If we are to protect the institutions of this country we must see that these men, whose voices will be raised in our forums with the voices of our children, shall raise them in praise and not in blame of this country and its laws.

How strange men are! They deal scientifically with all matters outside of the immediate affairs of men, but when it comes to man himself, childlike and helpless as he is in many situations, we leave him to shift for himself.

We hold up our hands in despair at the business man who ships his goods to a market in an amount greatly in excess of its real need, and we try to prevent it. Yet up to the present time we have done very little to prevent a concentration of such expensive machines as men from going into a glutted market and there decaying mentally and morally to the great injury of society.

Thousands of immigrants land here practically penniless, thus causing stagnation at the port of entry, it being impossible for them without money to reach centers where labor is needed.

True economy demands that something should be done to help this great influx of men to obtain work outside of the congested centers.

This requires the establishment of specially equipped trains, running from such congested centers as New York city to all parts of the country, which will carry these laboring men at actual cost, in order that they may be placed where their services are needed—on the farms and in factories. If this were done the railroads would soon be carrying back the product of their labor and they, in turn, would receive very ample indirect payment for the very low fare.

The League's Purposes

The National Liberal Immigration League aims to preserve for our country the benefits of immigration while keeping out undesirable immigrants.

To realize this object we advocate the following measures:

The laws excluding criminals, paupers, persons having dangerous contagious diseases, and similar undesirable classes, should be maintained and carefully enforced.

There should be no further restriction of immigration.

Immigrants should be educated, Americanized and fitted for American citizenship.

Ample provision should be made for the distribution of immigrants, who should be especially directed to the South and West.

In order to diminish the evils of congestion, free transportation should be granted from overcrowded regions to places where there is a demand for labor. Laborers who live in congested cities should also receive free or cheap transportations to suburbs.

Aliens who commit crimes after coming here—unless paroled or pardoned—should be deported.

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